

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

WSAG

25 JAN 74

24 January 1974

DCI BRIEFING FOR
25 JANUARY WSAG MEETING

THE SITUATION IN INDOCHINA

Vietnam

I. The cease-fire agreement will be a year old this month, and the war in South Vietnam is still sputtering on.

A. Although 1973 ended with some sharp fighting in the highlands and Communist "highpoints" in the southern provinces, December actually saw a decline in cease-fire violations, and 1974 has begun quietly.

B. If the Communists are planning any large-scale military offensive between now and May, when the dry season ends, we should see a greatly accelerated infiltration effort over the next several weeks.

1. So far this dry season only 22,000 troops have set out for South Vietnam. This is far below the average for this stage in previous dry seasons.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

2. The flow has picked up recently, and we would expect it to continue steadily at present levels or better if an offensive is in the cards.
 - a. This would be a shift from the flow so far in the dry season, which has displayed a highly uncharacteristic stop-and-go pattern.
3. All of the troops detected this dry season are headed for COSVN and the western highlands.
 - a. They should help alleviate manpower shortages in these areas, although combat units in some parts of South Vietnam will remain understrength and reserve pools will still be small--unless the rate of infiltration increases.
 - b. It might be noted that the Communists now have the capability to move troops into the highlands and COSVN areas about twice as fast as in past years.
4.

25X1

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

that the Communists will intensify the level of fighting in early 1974 to prevent government inroads and try to expand their own holdings, but will not start a general offensive.

25X1

II. There has been little change in the tactical situation in the past couple of months.

A. The recent heavy fighting in Quang Duc Province in the western highlands has left the Communists in control of two border outposts they seized in early December, but the government still holds the few populated centers.

1.

25X1

2. The North Vietnamese recently moved a third regiment into Quang Duc, possibly intending

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

to renew their pressure and thwart the government's plans.

3. Communist actions elsewhere since fall have been largely small scale harassments and terrorism aimed at securing a larger share of the rice harvest.

Cambodia

III. In Cambodia, the Khmer Communists' dry season combat capabilities have been improved by a substantial delivery of Vietnamese Communist military equipment.

A. Hanoi is giving the insurgents 900 tons of arms, ammunition, and other equipment, plus 296 vehicles.

1. Initial deliveries were made late last month in northeast Cambodia.
2. Some of the new equipment has already been allocated to insurgent units in battlefield areas near Phnom Penh. Other portions of it will be used in forming a number of new battalions.

B. The equipment appears to represent most--if not all--of North Vietnam's contribution to

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

the Khmer Communists for this dry season.

The impact of this assistance on the military situation and, more importantly, Hanoi's intent in providing it are not clear.

1. Hanoi may judge that this level of support is enough to retain some leverage with the insurgents--but not enough to allow them to obtain a decided military edge over Phnom Penh.
2. Still, the munitions should enable the Khmer Communists to sustain a high level of fighting well beyond the end of the dry season in May.

IV. Meanwhile, the Khmer Communists' failure to date to disrupt regular convoys on the Mekong has enabled the government to build up its stocks of essential material.

- A. Reserves of rice, POL, and munitions appear adequate for the near term.
- B. The government is also continuing its efforts to increase its manpower reserves.
 1. Since mid-October, approximately 16,000 new troops have been recruited, and most

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

are now in training.

2. Another 10,000 new troops are still needed, however.

V. The Khmer Communists retain the military initiative.

- A. In the first weeks of the dry season they concentrated on interdicting sections of Phnom Penh's few remaining overland supply routes.

1. The insurgents also gained some ground on the Mekong's east bank, from which they have been steadily shelling Phnom Penh.

- B. The Communists have now shifted the bulk of their military effort to areas near Phnom Penh.

1. They mounted a heavy drive against the capital's northern and northwestern defenses earlier this month.
2. The Cambodian Army has been able to regain the initiative in this sector, however.

- C. The Communists are beginning to increase pressure on Phnom Penh's southern defenses.

1. Some fighting has occurred within four miles of the capital.

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

2. Communist units in this area have been having coordination problems. As things now stand, government troops should be able to contain the new threat.

Laos

- VI. In Laos, Hanoi has made some significant troop redeployments since the cease-fire went into effect last February.
 - A. As many as three North Vietnamese infantry regiments have withdrawn from southern Laos, and there are indications that additional redeployments may soon occur in that sector.
 - B. In northern Laos, major elements of the North Vietnamese 316th Division, formerly based in the strategic Plaine des Jarres area, have also recently returned home.
 1. The withdrawals have not appreciably weakened North Vietnam's overall combat posture. An estimated 62,000 North Vietnamese troops are still deployed in Laos--33,000 in combat units and another 29,000 in logistic and administrative outfits.
 2. The withdrawals do indicate, however,

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0

that Hanoi is satisfied with the effectiveness of the cease-fire and anticipates no early resumption of major hostilities.

C. The Chinese have also begun to scale down their military presence in northern Laos.

1. During the past two months, virtually all of their air defense troops have returned to China. There are preparations for the withdrawal of two infantry regiments which have provided ground security for Chinese roadbuilders.

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2006/03/17 : CIA-RDP79R01099A002200010003-0